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CHRIST'S KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD.

THE

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

OF THE

KINGDOM OF CHRIST,

IN

THREE DISCOURSES

BY SETH WILLISTON,

Author of "The Harmony of Divine Truth," "Discourses on the Temptations of Christ," etc.

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THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

DISCOURSE I.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.—John 18. 36.

When Pilate asked Jesus whether he was the king of the Jews, he implicitly acknowledged the fact; but to prevent all mistake, as though his dominion might have some rivalship with that of Cæsar, he answered, "My kingdom is not of *this world*." In this answer he teaches us two things:

I. That he is at the head of an interest or community which may with propriety be called a kingdom.

II. That this interest is so entirely different from the kingdoms and governments of this world as not to be reckoned one of their number.

I. The interest which Christ has set up among men may with propriety be called a kingdom; for,

1. Like other kingdoms it has a *supreme head*.

Christ himself is its head. This is implied in his calling it *his* kingdom. He it is concerning whom the Father speaks, when he says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." He is the king whom the angel Gabriel declared should reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of whose kingdom there should be no end. He is head over all things to the church; and of the church itself he is the very head. Ps. 2. 6. Luke 1. 33. Eph. 1. 22. Col. 1. 18.

Christ is perfectly competent to preside over this kingdom; for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. He has ability to legislate for his church, and to administer its government, also to defend and protect it. Though he has a dependent nature in common with his subjects, being a man as well as they, he is not a *mere man*, nor a *mere creature*. If he were he would be infinitely incompetent to be the supreme Head of the church. But he is the "mighty God," and therefore fully able to bear the weight of that great government which is laid upon his shoulder. Isa. 9. 6.

2. The kingdom over which Christ presides resembles the kingdoms of this world, in that it has *a certain definite number who constitute its subjects*. Christ's kingdom on earth has two

very different classes of subjects, namely, those who are such in *heart*, and those who are such only by *profession*. Thus he himself taught us, when he likened this kingdom to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom; of which number five were wise and five were foolish. All those who profess the religion of Christ, and attach themselves to some branch of the visible church, are counted for the subjects of his kingdom. As viewed by their fellow men these constitute the church: but as they are viewed by Christ himself, very many of them have neither part nor lot in the matter. They, and they alone, who have a birth which is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, are the true and loyal subjects of his kingdom. These are distinguished from the mere visible subjects, by that inward discernment they have of the supreme excellency of their King, and by their attachment to his government. They prefer his kingdom above their chief joy; so that in their estimation other things have their importance according to their direct tendency to promote its invaluable interests. Among the other class of subjects, open revolt and apostacy are not unfrequent, but these who are spiritually

enlightened will retain their loyalty, they will endure to the end.

3. The community over which Christ presides has *established laws for its regulation*, and is therefore properly denominated a kingdom. These laws are all contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The moral law, which can never be abrogated, is comprehended in those ten distinct commandments, which God wrote with his own finger on the tables of stone, and which the Savior condensed into two; the first enjoining supreme love to God, and the other impartial love to our neighbor.

The precepts of the Bible are obligatory on all men, not excepting those who remain without the pale of the church; but such as are within its pale are supposed to have given their consent to them, as the invariable rule of their life. Moreover, Christ has given some rules which are particularly designed for the members of his visible family. Some of these rules relate to the observance of special divine ordinances, some to the admission and exclusion of members, and other things pertaining to their internal government.

4. The interest which Christ has set up, and which he has exhibited before the world in that community called the church, is properly deno-

minated his *kingdom*, because, like the kingdoms of earth, *it is capable of being perpetuated from generation to generation*, and of being enlarged by acquiring new subjects and new territory.

Other kingdoms and governments are perpetuated by successive generations, who acknowledge the authority of the same laws, and of that succession of rulers who are appointed to see them executed. The kingdom of Great Britain has existed many centuries, though not a man who held a place in it a century and a half ago can be found among its present inhabitants. The republic of the United States is the same government it was when our independence was first declared, or, perhaps more properly, when the federal constitution was adopted, though the great majority of its present population came into existence long since even the last of these dates.

The church of Christ on earth is wholly made up of mortal men; and yet the church has lived through every age, from the beginning to the present time. As new generations of men are continually coming on the stage to perpetuate a kingdom or state, so a new generation of Christians rise up to perpetuate the church.

Kingdoms and states are susceptible of enlargement by natural population, by conquests,

or by more peaceful means of adding territory to their former possessions. They are also susceptible of diminution. In these respects Christ's church resembles the kingdoms of this world. It can be enlarged by an increasing progeny, which the apostle represents by the natural branches of the olive tree. These, however, will not make loyal subjects in the kingdom of God, unless he shall verify to their believing parents the promise of pouring his Spirit upon their seed and his blessing upon their offspring. Isa. 44. 3.

The church of Christ, like the kingdoms of men, may be enlarged by immigrations, and by the acquisition of new territory. While its location was in the land of Canaan, the Lord by the prophet thus addressed it: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations—for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles." Isa. 54. 2, 3. And though Christ's kingdom is not, like other kingdoms, liable to utter destruction, yet has it repeatedly been diminished and brought low.

Having suggested several reasons why Christ denominated his church a kingdom, I proceed to show,

II. WHY HE DECLARED THAT HIS KINGDOM WAS NOT OF THIS WORLD.

It exists in this world where other kingdoms do; but it widely differs from them all, in its nature, and the objects it designs to accomplish. Though it is in the world, it is not of a worldly character. This is intimated by its being called "the kingdom of heaven"—"the kingdom of God"—"the household of faith," and the like. The discriminating features by which it differs from all the kingdoms and governments of this world, are such as these:

1. It has altogether *a different head*. The kingdoms of this world are ruled by men, mere men; but He who is at the head of this kingdom is God in our nature—"God manifest in the flesh." Human governments not only have men, but a succession of them to preside over their concerns; but Zion's King is the same through every generation. 1 Tim. 1. 17. He knows the number, circumstances, and real character of all his subjects. He has power not only to enact his own laws, but also to secure obedience to their requirements, or to inflict their penalties on the disobedient. He who is at the head of this kingdom has the control of all other kingdoms and of all worlds: for he is King of kings and Lord of lords. The Head of

the church is Head over all things to the church. Eph. 1. 22.

Zion's King is as *good* as he is great. His moral perfection is equal to his knowledge and power. His coming in the flesh was thus announced by one of the last of the Old Testament prophets: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zech. 9. 9. Such an assemblage of excellences meet in no earthly prince. He is *just*—strictly and impartially just, so that he will by no means clear the guilty. Nevertheless he has *salvation*—salvation from a punishment which is inconceivably dreadful, and yet richly deserved. In Him justice and mercy meet, and are both of them gloriously and consistently displayed. He is also *lowly*. This is a rare quality in a monarch: but in Zion's King it has a distinguished place. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth; and yet lowly enough to wash the feet of the meanest of his subjects. Though he is high, infinitely high, he has respect unto the lowly.

2. The *laws* of Christ's kingdom are very different from the laws of earthly governments. Human laws can take cognizance of nothing but

external acts. And even of these, it is only the smaller part which they undertake to regulate. But the laws of Christ extend to all our moral conduct, claiming a right to regulate the whole man, both the external and internal. None of these laws can be fulfilled without the exercise of *love;* even that love which has for its object the universe of intelligent beings; which universe, according to the instructions of our Divine Teacher, is all comprised in three words, *God*, my *neighbor*, and *myself*.

The subjects of this spiritual kingdom are to consider themselves, at all times and in all places, "under law to Christ." His precepts relate to our obligations of every kind—such as we are under to ourselves, both in relation to our bodies and souls—such as we are under to those with whom we are connected in relative life—and such as we are under to human governments and mankind at large.

These laws differ greatly from those of other kingdoms in this respect, that they relate very much to those duties which we owe directly to *God.* They require that we make Him the object of supreme love, and his glory the ultimate end of every pursuit. They require repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and enjoin it upon us to be filled with

the Spirit. They teach us to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. All the inculcations of human governments, which relate to living soberly and righteously, are far exceeded by the stricter laws of Christ; and while their inculcations leave out the duties of *godliness*, these in His kingdom hold the first rank.

3. As the kingdom of Christ has a different head and different laws, so it has quite a different *object* which it designs to accomplish. Human governments confine their attention to the things which relate to the present life. They seek to rise above their neighbors by wealth and power; and sometimes by their philosophical researches and other attainments in science. They train up their sons to be husbandmen, mechanics, manufacturers, merchants, soldiers, politicians, physicians, philosophers, and the like; with a view to the enjoyment of every temporal convenience. These things are not without their importance; but the object, proposed to be accomplished by the kingdom of Christ, is immensely greater. It contemplates men as immortal beings, passing through a short probation to a state final retribution. It also contemplates them as having a depraved nature, which renders them obnoxious to divine justice, and

incapable of any pure and rational enjoyment. Its grand object is to transform the humau character; to make men, in a moral sense, *new creatures*. While it changes sots into sober men, and other pests of society into good citizens, it it seeks an object altogether more valuable than this, namely, to make them good subjects of the holy dominion of the Most High, and to prepare them for heaven.

The distinctive marks of Christ's approved subjects are peculiar to themselves. They have been converted, and so have become, in a spiritual sense, little children. The blessing, which the Savior pronounced upon the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace makers, and the persecuted for righteousness sake, belongs to them. They have all been taught in the school of Christ, and have learned of him who is meek and lowly of heart. They are not yet perfect; but it is the object of that spiritual kingdom, to which they have attached themselves, to improve their renovated character and train them up for a state of perfection in holiness and blessedness. This was the very design of that distinct organization called the *church*. Its internal government has no relation to the affairs of this life, only as these

stand connected with the interests of the life to come. The affairs of the present life it leaves to be regulated by secular governments, while it enjoins on all its members the important duty of watching over one another's moral conduct; to admonish, reprove and receive reproof in the spirit of meekness; also, to sympathize with each other in all the trials of their pilgrimage.

4. Christ's kingdom greatly differs from the kingdoms of this world, as to the *means which it employs for its extension.* States and kingdoms are enlarged, beside what is done by their natural population, either by purchase or conquest; most commonly by the latter. But in neither of these two ways does Christ extend his kingdom. He never sells the gifts or graces of his spirit for money. Acts 8. 19—21. And surely we can do nothing more at variance with the spirit of the gospel than to attempt its promulgation by the power of the sword.

The grand weapon which the Redeemer employs to extend his holy empire is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. This is that rod of his strength which he promised to send out of Zion, to prepare the way for him to rule in the midst of his enemies. Ps. 110. 2, 3. He sends it out in printed pages by means of the

press, and by the ministry of the word. When the ministers of the word go forth to their work in the spirit of their office; and when the whole church emit the light of a holy example, and pour forth the prayer of faith, the standard of the cross advances. In this peaceful manner does the Redeemer build up his kingdom in the earth. The ministry of the word, and other human instrumentality, must be used, but after all, our chief dependence for advancing the kingdom of Christ, is on the secret but mighty influence of the Holy Ghost. Why is the word called "the sword of the *Spirit*," unless it be to teach us, that this Divine Agent must take it into his own almighty hand to render it effectual? With all the external means which are placed in our hands, to enable us to advance the kingdom of Christ, we should despair of its advancement, and even of its preservation from utter extinction, were the Spirit's influences to be entirely withheld from us. The Savior declared, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." It is by the Spirit's quickening power that Christ has gained every subject to his kingdom, whose subjection has been hearty and sincere. And in this way it is that he will acquire all his subjects in time to come. There will be

no new or easier way of doing it even in the Millennium itself.

5. The kingdom of Christ differs from all other kingdoms in its *duration*. There is no human government, whether empire, kingdom, or republic, whose existence can be traced back to the beginning of time. Those states and kingdoms, which attract the most attention in the world's history, had there origin long after the beginning of time, and yet most of them have for many generations ceased to exist. As to the governments which are now in existence, it is not probable that one of them will be perpetuated to the end of time. But the kingdom of Christ has been in existence ever since the way was made by the fall of man for its erection; and it will be found on the earth at the world's last day. It is not, however, so much its continuance from the beginning to the end of time, which renders its duration unlike to that of all other kingdoms; it is rather its continuance when time shall be no more. Other kingdoms rise in this world, and here they come to an end; but the kingdom of the Redeemer, though it rises in this world, will survive not only the wreck of other kingdoms, but of the world it self. This kingdom, which the God of heaven has set up, shall never be destroyed nor left to

other people. Its loyal subjects, who leave the earth one after another, are immediately advanced to the upper kingdom. And when He, who has power over all flesh, shall have given eternal life to as many as were given him, then will he bring them all together, into those mansions which he has prepared for them in his Father's house. Then shall they shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Now will be seen the pure principles on which the kingdom of Christ is built. It will be seen that these principles were adapted to effect a complete transformation of man's depraved nature, and impart a moral excellence, to which men who have their portion in this life are utter strangers. It can never more be matter of dispute whether the tendency of the religion of Christ was good; or whether his subjects improved their character by coming under his sceptre. In this world the church is black, at the same that she is comely. And because she is black, her comeliness is often despised. It is made a matter of dispute whether she has any claim at all to comeliness, especially, to be called the "fairest among women." But when her deformity shall all be removed, her comeliness can no longer be disputed. Her deformity, even the last vestige of it, will be

removed before she enters her heavenly state, but her beauty, even after this, will be increasing for ever and ever. Blessed are those who have an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I have now shown why it is that the interest over which Christ presides, is denominated a *kingdom ;* also, what is implied in its not being a kingdom of this world. Is not this subject, my brethren, adapted to exert a *practical* influence ? To show its adaptation to this object, was the occasion of its being selected. Among the lessons of instruction which it furnishes are these which follow.

1. In the heavenly nature of Christ's kingdom we discover *the greatness both of the duties and privileges of its subjects.* To advance its interests should be the chief end of all men ; and most certainly of those who acknowledge Christ to be their king. There is no other object they can seek which has such a direct tendency to promote the glory of God, or the happiness of man. The kingdom of Christ is a focal point where the rays of God's glory meet, and from which they radiate, to make him known to all his intelligent creatures. As saith the Psalmist, " Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God

hath shined." It is a kingdom of light, before which the darkness and misery of our apostate world flee away. Every degree of its advancement augments the revenue of divine glory, and adds to the stock of human happiness.

It behooves the subjects of this peculiar kingdom to be "a peculiar people." Not that they are required to withdraw from human society and become hermits. Were they to do this, they would no longer resemble the city set on a hill which cannot be hid. Their opportunity of being useful to their fellow-men would be lost. To shine as lights before men, is their appropriate work; therefore they must live among men. But while they live among men, it behooves them to imitate the example of Him who, in the midst of sinners, was "separate from sinners." According to the apostolic exhortation, they ought to avoid all sinful conformity to the world, seeking continually to be tranformed by the renewing of their minds.

As members of civil society Christians have both the rights and duties of citizens. They, in common with their fellow men, are obliged to engage in secular business. The entire neglect of such business, or a slothful attention to it, is a fault, not a virtue. But unless our religion shall shed its purifying influence over all our

secular business, we do not demean ourselves as becomes the subjects of a spiritual kingdom. Rom. 12. 11. We who have attached ourselves to an interest so exclusively spiritual as the kingdom of Christ; an interest whose chief object is to prepare men for heaven, have given our fellow men a right to expect that they will see in us something superior to mere politicians or secular men. Surely it becomes us as subjects of such a spiritual kingdom, to be spiritually and not carnally-minded. If we are the subjects of the kingdom of heaven, let us be heavenly-minded. Let our thoughts, speech and behavior be of a heavenly character.

The *privileges* of the subjects of Christ's kingdom, (if He has made them such,) are great beyond expression. They have been delivered from the worst and translated into the best kingdom in the universe: and are thereby unfitted for the society of the spirits of hell, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. They are not only brought into God's kingdom, but the kingdom of God is set up in their souls. That image of their Creator which was lost by the fall, has been restored in part, and, under the transforming influence of the Holy Ghost, is continually advancing towards perfection. The promises of God, which are exceedingly great

and precious, belong exclusively to them. By grace they are made essentially to differ from all other men. Their privileges transcend those of the subjects of all other kingdoms; yea, to be the meanest subject in the kingdom of heaven, is a higher honor than to be the greatest potentate on earth. Should any subject of Christ's kingdom aspire to the president's chair in our republic, or even to the throne of an empire, for any object foreign to that of advancing that spiritual interest which he has espoused, he would not walk worthy of his high and holy calling as a Christian. Such an attempt to rise, would, in the sight of God and other benevolent beings, serve not to exalt, but to degrade him.

2. From the attention we have paid to the spiritual character of Christ's kingdom, we perceive it may, as time and place are concerned, *co-exist with other kingdoms and governments, and yet not at all interfere with them.* The religion of Christ requires of us supreme regard to him as king over all the earth; yet it strictly enjoins subjection to those earthly governments under which his providence has placed us. It does not merely tolerate subjection to the civil power, but makes such subjection essential to the Christian character. The great apostle to the

Gentiles, in the name of his Master, gives this command; "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Again, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, and to be ready to every good work." Peter, guided by the same Spirit, says, "Fear God, honor the king." Rom. 13. 1. 1 Titus 3. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 17.

Christ did not forbid his followers to pay tribute to Cæsar. Neither did his apostles forbid it. On the contrary they enjoin it as a Christian duty. "Render therefore unto all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom." Matt. 22. 17–21. Romans 13. 7.

When the Head of the church appeared among men, though he was by right the Prince of the kings of the earth, he did nothing to interfere with their governments. When he perceived that the people would come to take him by force to make him a king, he departed into a mountain alone. He assumed no earthly dominion, nor would he suffer it to be forced upon him. The Pharisees once sought to procure from him a sentence of condemnation against an adulteress, whom they brought to him; but he refused to take the seat of a judge. And when he was applied to for the purpose of settling a

dispute between two litigating brothers, in relation to their patrimony, he replied to the applicant, " Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" The instructions which he gave while he was in the world, were designed to help men decide on the morality of all their actions, civil as well as religious, and he let them know that the words which he spoke would judge them in the last day ; and yet he assumed no temporal dominion, or authority incompatible with entire loyalty to the government under which he lived.

It is true that Christ established over his church a government of his own ; but it is of such a nature as to have no tendency to interfere with a good civil government of any form. He gave rules for the admission, discipline, and, if need be, the exclusion of members : but these rules do not claim for the church the right of inflicting corporal punishments of any kind, or the exaction of fines ; but merely the use of moral means to preserve its purity. Exclusion from membership in the church, which is the severest punishment Christ authorizes us to inflict, leaves men in full possession of their rights as citizens : they are not at all abridged. Nor has he given us liberty to call on the civil power to aid us in the discipline of his house. We

have no right to call on the magistrate to punish our disorderly members, unless in transgressing the laws of the church, they have also transgressed those of the state. Some of those laws, which more appropriately belong to Christ's spiritual kingdom, such as those which relate to the observance of the Sabbath, may be so important to secure a healthful state of morals in the civil community, as to be adopted into their code. Now if the breakers of these laws, which are common to both church and state, are punished by the authority of the latter, it should never be forgotten, they are punished for disobeying the laws of the state, not of the church.

There is but one kingdom on earth to which the kingdom of Christ stands directly opposed, and that is the kingdom of Satan. This kingdom Christ came on purpose to destroy. These two kingdoms, Christ's and Satan's, are in direct contrariety to each other. Every subject which Christ gains, Satan loses. When all the inhabitants of the earth shall become Christ's subjects, Satan's kingdom will be destroyed. He will then be driven from the earth. But to the kingdoms of this world, so far as they are designed to regulate the civil concerns of men, Christ's kingdom has no such repugnance. He calls on

all men to come under his yoke, but does not require them to cast off the yoke of human government. The three thousand, who were added to the church on the day of Pentecost, were translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ; but they still remained under the government of the Roman emperor. Nor did the circumstance of their having put on the Redeemer's yoke, render them less loyal or valuable subjects of his imperial majesty.

3. When we understand what Christ meant by saying, "My kingdom is not of this world," we discover *the pertinency of that reason which he assigned, why his servants did not fight, to prevent his being delivered to the Jews.* Immediately after pronouncing the words of the text, he adds, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." The reason which he offered why his servants did not fight, does not, as I should think, decide on the subject of war in general, so as to furnish proof that it is wrong to repel with arms an invading foe. But on *this* point it does decide, namely—That *the Church*, considered as a spiritual kingdom, has no right to make use of the sword in her greatest extremities: for if a case could ever occur where such a right was

possessed, this was certainly one. The force of his argument against taking the sword, was not this; that such a method of repelling so wicked an assault would be incompatible with a spirit of benevolence; but that it would be incompatible with the very nature of a spiritual kingdom —a kingdom which had never been intrusted with secular authority. Had Christ given the power of the sword to his church, it would have been one of the kingdoms of this world, and might have had the appearance of being a rival with them. But now it is not so. If the servants of Christ bear arms they must do it under the direction of the civil government, and as being its subjects in common with their fellow citizens. Were they to take arms to spread their religion, or to defend themselves against their persecutors, they would thereby put themselves in the attitude of a secular community, contrary to the intent of their Lord and Master.

Here we perceive a very striking difference between Christ and Mahomet. The genius of Mahomet's religion is learned by seeing the sword placed on the Koran. Those who have been converted to his religion, have at the same time been brought under the yoke of his secular government. As his dominion extended, other dominions retreated before it. But when Christ

sent forth his ministers to spread *his religion*, he put no other sword into their hands but the sword of the Spirit; therefore his kingdom went forward, without causing other kingdoms to go back.

I am unwilling to pass from this branch of our subject, without leaving my testimony against every thing which looks like the cherishing of a war spirit. Though, as an interpreter of God's word, I have felt myself constrained to say, that the reason given by the Savior why his servants did not fight for his rescue from the Jews, does not, in my opinion, amount to proof of the unjustifiableness of all war made by secular governments, such as the repelling of an invading foe, yet I am ready to aver, that I believe the practice of national war, as it has been, and is yet carried on in the world, to be one of the greatest sins and greatest follies of a fallen race. "Their feet are swift to shed blood," is a true and affecting description of mankind. When contentions about a little disputed territory, or some nice point of national honor, draw forth great armies into the field of battle, where innumerable multitudes are precipitated into eternity by deadly weapons in the hands of their fellow men, there is not only great mischief done, but great guilt incurred. What a tremendous day

that must be when "the earth shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain!" In proportion as the number of real Christians shall be multiplied in any nation, will war become unpopular. Soame Jenyns remarks, that if Christian nations were nations of *Christians*, they would not fight. The Millenium will prove the truth of this remark.

4. In the light of this subject we discover *one important particular, wherein the church of Christ now differs from what it was in its Jewish state.* Some may think that it differs in every particular; but this, I conceive, is quite a mistake. Has the church received a new head? Was not Christ the King of the Jews? The laws, for substance, are the same. The system of doctrine and the way of salvation are the same. Salvation was then taught by types, but it was a salvation by grace, not by the deeds of the law. The same traits of character, *internal* as well as external, were required under the Old Testament as under the New. It is the great object of the gospel to make men holy and fit them for heaven: and was not this also the object of the ancient dispensation? We are told that God gave his people the lands of the heathen, *that they might observe his statutes and keep his laws.* Ps. 105. 44, 45. He directed

them to make it the end of all the education and training they were to give to their children, to lead them to *set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God.* Ps. 78. 5—8. He neither required nor accepted any less perfect religion of the Jews, than that which he requires of us. Deut. 10. 12, 16. Ps. 51. 6, 16, 17. In these great features, the Jewish and Gentile churches are alike. The Gentile church is therefore nothing else than a continuation of the Jewish. The kingdom of Heaven which is given to us, is the same which was taken from them. Gentile converts have come into the commonwealth of Israel: or, with another figure in view, they have been ingrafted into their olive tree. Matt. 21. 43. Eph. 2. 12. Rom. 11. 17.

Notwithstanding these points of resemblance, the remark is still true, that our subject discovers an important particular wherein the church now differs from what it was in its Jewish state. This difference relates to the power of the sword, that is, the right of exercising *civil* as well as ecclesiastical authority. Under the Old Testament, the Lord, having chosen the seed of Abraham for his covenant people, promised them a particular country for their inheritance. And when the former inhabitants of this coun-

try had filled up the measure of their iniquity, he authorised his chosen people to extirpate them and take possession of their lands. This whole territory became theirs by a grant from the most high God, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth. The right of self government, in civil as well as ecclesiastical matters, was committed to their hands. God, their Supreme King, made all their laws, both ecclesiastical and civil. Their government has therefore been denominated a *theocracy*—a divine government. But under the New Testament, as it was not the Lord's purpose to confine his church to any particular nation or territory, he takes out of the hands of his people all that power of self-government, which relates to their civil concerns. In things of this nature he now requires them to be subject to the powers which exist, wherever his providence shall locate them. But in relation to their ecclesiastical affairs, they are still to consider themselves as "a people dwelling alone, and not reckoned with the nations." As the *church of God*, they have one Master even Christ, and all they are brethren.

By what I have now said concerning the difference between the Old and New Testament churches, I have not intended to assert, that the power of exercising civil, as well as ecclesiasti-

cal jurisdiction, was essential to the existence of the church, even under the Old Testament. This was far from being true: for the church existed a long time before it had any particular territory assigned it; or at least before it had received a commission to bring that territory under the control of its laws. There was also a period of several hundred years, which intervened betwixt the Babylonish captivity and the coming of Christ, when the church was in such a state of dependence as to be, for the most part, under the control of some foreign power; yet this state of civil bondage did not destroy its existence as a spiritual kingdom, an ecclesiastical community. While under the control of Roman laws it was still known, in scripture dialect, as "the commonwealth of Israel."

In this connection we can see wherein the nation of Israel, not excepting those who were "Israelites indeed," underwent a disappointment at the advent of Christ. It seems to have been the universal expectation that their Messiah, when he should come, would assume the reins of civil government, and disenthral them from their political vassalage. "We trusted that it had been he," said some of Christ's own disciples, "which should have redeemed Israel." You remember that just before his ascension,

"they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Hence it appears evident, that up to this time they expected something from him, besides redemption from iniquity and future punishment: they expected he would redeem them from the Roman yoke, and restore to them a national independence. This last was all the redemption which the carnal Jews wished their Messiah to accomplish for them. Those who became the true disciples of Christ wished for a better redemption. They saw the superior glory of a *spiritual* above that of a *temporal* kingdom, and after that copious baptism of the Spirit, which they received on and after the day of Pentecost, they seem to have given up both the expectation and desire of seeing the two blended in one. Thenceforward their prayers and efforts all centered in the advancement of that divine kingdom which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

DISCOURSE II.

Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world.—John 18. 36.

In the preceding Discourse I described the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and pointed out several particulars wherein it differs from the kingdoms of this world. To render the subject practical, I then proceeded to mention some inferences or lessons of instruction which it seemed naturally to furnish: such as:—1. The greatness both of the duties and privileges of the subjects of this spiritual kingdom:—2. The feasibility of its occupying the same territory occupied by the kingdoms of this world:—3. A satisfactory reason why the subjects of this kingdom, as such, are forbidden to fight:—4. An important particular wherein this spiritual kingdom is at present different from what it was under the Old Testament, namely, its ceasing to exercise a *civil* jurisdiction. I shall now go on to other practical remarks which seem to be suggested by the subject. I am led to remark,

5 That by attending to the exclusively spir-

itual character of Christ's kingdom we can see, that all that *violent opposition* which it has met with from the kingdoms of this world, at least, when it has been moving on in its own legitimate sphere of action, has been *without cause.* Since it prescribes no form of civil policy, and claims no authority of a secular nature, but requires its subjects to obey the magistrates of every country, in every thing wherein they do not require palpable disobedience to the laws Christ, what reason can the governments of this world have for employing their authority to hinder its extension? So long as Christians, in seeking to advance the kingdom of Christ, keep within their own sphere, they do nothing which ought to provoke opposition from earthly princes. If they oppose the servants of Christ, when they do nothing to stir up sedition or to injure the morals of society, but, on the contrary, make all their efforts centre in this one object, the transformation of a sinful into a holy world—the subversion of Satan's rule, and the establishment of Jehovah's; such opposition can be nothing less than hostility to the King of heaven, and friendship to the prince of hell.

The deep policy of him, who (to our shame) is styled "the god of this world," has been displayed in the pains he has taken to work into

the very frame of human governments such systems of religious error, as are well adapted to prolong his usurped dominion over the children of Adam. This has thrown a mighty obstacle in the way of the spread of true religion. Pagan idolatry was so interwoven with the civil government throughout the Roman empire, that it gave Satan great advantage to withstand the apostles and primitive Christians in their attempts to subvert his throne. It enabled him to set in array against them the authority of the emperors and their subordinate rulers, for the purpose of preventing their casting down his idol gods. This advantage against the disciples of Christ he still more eminently enjoys in Mahomedan countries. Here the religion of the false prophet is so closely combined with their civil policy as to bar the door against the entrance of the missionary of the cross.

And here let me ask, whether the policy of this same malicious spirit may not have been concerned in the blending of ecclesiastical with secular rule in some of the governments of Christendom? Has not a mutual injury been done to the civil and ecclesiastical governments by their invading each other's prerogatives? Has not the church greatly injured the state by forgetting that her dominion was exclusively

spiritual? And has not the state, in its turn, as greatly abused the church, by not keeping in mind that its government was civil and not ecclesiastical? If Christ forbids his church, as a spiritual community, to interfere with the governmental concerns of the countries where she is located, may he not reasonably expect that the governments of these countries will suffer his church to transact her own spiritual concerns, without their interference. When these governments claim the right to dictate to the church what doctrines she shall embrace, what members she shall receive into her communion or exclude from it, what ministers she shall admit to her pulpits or refuse to admit, do they not merit the same rebuke which the church has deserved by attempting (as her history shows she has done) to assume the civil in connection with the ecclesiastical power? I would not however, intimate that either church or state is to feel indifferent towards each other's welfare. They doubtless have mutual obligations. It is incumbent on the state to grant protection to the church; while it is the duty of the church, by her spiritual instructions, fervent prayers, and holy living, to seek the prosperity of the state. See Jer. 29, 7. 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. There is nothing incongruous in their advising each other

in relation to those matters in which both communities are concerned. But is it not for the well-being of both, that their governments should be kept entirely distinct, and that they should carefully avoid any encroachment on each other's prerogatives ?*

There is one other practical use which I wish to make of the subject before us: and with regard to this I must ask your indulgence should I extend my remarks to a considerable length. I think that the existing state of our American Zion is such as to give me a claim to the indulgence I ask. Presuming on your patient and candid attention to what I shall further present, I proceed to state,

6. That in the light reflected by this subject, we discover some important reasons, *why*

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* Let none suppose, by what has now been said concerning the impropriety of mixing together the civil and ecclesiastical governments, that the King of Zion denies his right to command the kings and judges of the earth. As king on the holy hill of Zion, he requires them, at their peril, to acknowledge fealty to Him: "Kiss the son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." If after they have become acquainted with His laws, they enact such as are in direct contrariety to them, they must answer for their contempt of his supreme dominion; but it is at His bar, and not that of his church, they must appear. See Psalm ii.

neither Christ nor his apostles made direct attacks on what may appear to us to be great faults in those civil institutions which were then in existence.

It is possible that some have been prejudiced against the Bible, because it recognizes such a civil ruler as a *king*, and requires subjection to his authority. The truth is, that the Bible does not prescribe any form of civil government, requiring subjection to that particular form, in distinction from all others. But as kingly government was the form which most prevailed in the world, when the scriptures were written, it was natural that this form should be more frequently alluded to than any other. We are, however, required to obey magistrates, whatever might be the official name whereby they are distinguished, and to pray for all that are in authority. 1. Tim. 2. 1, 2.

Some, no doubt, would have been pleased if Christ had left us his sentiments concerning the best form of civil government. In their view it would be a great desideratum, to find something in the New Testament which should be very pointed against monarchical government, and in favor of democracy. But when they have examined all which was recorded by the four Evangelists concerning the public

and private discourses of the Savior, and when they have read through all the epistles, which were written by Paul, James, Peter, John, and Jude, they find no discussion on this topic, nor any opinion expressed in relation to it. This omission may possibly crowd some warm politician to the verge of infidelity. He may say, "I have no great opinion of a book which says so much of the duty of subjection to *despots*." But let me entreat such a one not to be hasty in discarding a book, which has so many external and internal proofs of inspiration, merely because it has made no decision concerning the best form of civil government. Only be candid in your attention to this subject, and you may yet be convinced, that what you now consider a defect in the religion of Christ is really an argument in its favor. Let such things as these be considered:

1st. An opinion from the mouth of the Savior on this political question would have been so inappropriate, and aside from the grand design of his advent, that its tendency would have been to obscure that design. The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, an object infinitely superior to that of establishing civil liberty in its purest form. He came to free us from the dominion and

punishment of sin; to restore to us both the image and favor of God, which had been lost by the fall; to bring back a world of rebels from an unreasonable and ruinous revolt to a cordial reconciliation to divine government. In comparison with such an object, every other attempt to meliorate the condition of fallen man dwindles into insignificance.

2dly. The duties enjoined, and the benefits proffered in the gospel, are calculated for mankind at large, under whatever form of government they may chance to live. If the gospel had expressly decided against monarchical, and in favor of democratic governments, it had been a certain consequence that the preachers of the gospel would have been shut out from all the monarchies on earth. Had the apostles attempted to go through the Roman empire, preaching down imperial government, they would have been immediately arrested. But if they could have passed through the empire unmolested, such preaching would have been but poorly adapted to answer the grand design of their appointment. It would have showed that they had forgotten their great errand, namely, to preach Christ and him crucified; and in his name to beseech men to be reconciled unto God.

3dly. Another reason why the religion of Christ prescribes no form of civil government, but requires us, under every form, to be good citizens, may be this; that it is no easy thing to prescribe any one form which shall be best for all countries and people. As much as I prize our republican form of government, I cannot say that I think it would be the best for every other nation. Where the public mind has had very little scientific culture, but especially where the religion and morals of a people are corrupt, they seem to be incapable of self government. Has South America at all improved her condition by casting off from her neck the yoke of monarchy, and establishing the republican form of government in its room? Until her new republics shall have a purer religion and a better state of morals, there will be no end to their bloody revolutions.

Furthermore, I would ask, whether in the government of this world, there are not times when, all things considered, it is expedient to *tolerate* some things which are not just as they should be? The law which Jehovah, in the character of *Moral Governor* of the universe, has enacted, is perfect. This law he can neither repeal nor abate. Let men be ever so depraved, the moral law requires nothing less

than perfect holiness. But Jehovah himself, when he took the place of *Civil Ruler* to the nation of Israel, tolerated some things which he did not approve. He did not approve of their desire for a king when they petitioned for one; and yet he consented to the existence of this form of government among them, and even made laws which should correspond with it. He did not approve of such a multitude of causes of divorce as suited the humor of the people; and yet, during the Old Testament dispensation, he suffered it, and even made laws to keep it within certain restrictions. Polygamy was never in accordance with the original constitution of things; and yet the civil laws of God's own people did not directly forbid it. Deut. 21. 15, 16. Now if God himself, as the civil head or temporal king of Israel, tolerated things which were not entirely in unison with the moral law, it is not strange that he should sustain his church under all sorts of civil government, and require that under them all, they should lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

There is, peradventure, another thing which has of late bid fairer to prejudice many against the Bible, than what relates to the form of civil government. I refer to *domestic servi-*

tude. In this sacred book there are repeated recognitions of the existence of a servitude which seems to have been of the same nature with that now termed slavery ; and these recognitions are so worded as naturally to induce the belief that the servitude they have in view was at least tolerated ; that is, that it was not expressly required that it should be abolished. No man who has confidence in the perfection of God, and who believes that the scriptures are a revelation of his will, can object to a scriptural investigation of this subject. Surely he can have no doubt that God understood the subject, and that whatever he has said in relation to it must have been in accordance with wisdom. Any attempt on our part to conceal what he has said, cannot please him, but will merit his just rebuke. Laying aside all prejudice, let us hear then what God has spoken. In our investigation of this subject, we shall more particularly examine the scriptures of the New Testament. As they contain the latest revelation of the will of God to man, their testimony will be the most unexceptionable in relation to such as live under the gospel dispensation.

There are *two* things which it concerns us to ascertain: *First*, What was the nature of

that domestic servitude which the scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, describe. *Secondly*, What were the duties connected with this servitude.

It concerns us *first* to ascertain the *nature* of that domestic servitude which the scriptures describe. Among those who are agreed in their belief of the divine authority of the Bible, two different ways are taken to free it from the odium which is cast upon it on account of the precepts it gives relative to the subject of servitude. One class seek to remove this odium by supposing that the servitude which is recognised, especially in the New Testament, was nothing more than the servitude of the *hireling*. They think themselves justified in this supposition by the circumstance, that the returning prodigal, in his subdued frame of mind, is represented as saying to his father, "Make me as one of thy *hired servants*;" implying that no servants were known at that period whose condition was more humiliating than that of hired men.

It seems to be the opinion of this class, allowing that involuntary servitude did then exist in the unbelieving world, that it had no existence among the disciples of Christ. In proof of this they say the apostle declares, "There is

neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither *bond* nor *free;* for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." In harmony with this sentiment they suppose that whenever masters and servants, bond and free, are spoken of as brought together in the church of Christ, it does not import that the relations indicated by these names were then in existence, but merely that before their conversion to Christianity such relations had existed. To illustrate their sentiment, they say it is common for officers in the military and civil departments of government, to retain their titles long after their official authority has ceased.

In examining the scriptures on this or any other topic, the inquiry should not be, what would we like to have them speak, but rather what have they spoken. Now, without recurring to any other history of gospel times beside that which is found in the inspired writings, I am constrained to believe there was a servitude then on earth, and even in the church, of the same general nature with that which is now denominated *slavery.* I will begin by showing that we have reason to believe it existed somewhere; either in the church or in the world, or in both. There are passages, alluding to domestic servitude, which describe something quite different from the condition of

a hired man. The Savior, when he would teach us that we do not bring God into debt by our most faithful services, refers to the case of a servant who had no claim to receive thanks from his master, even when he had done the whole which had been required of him: "Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not." Is it not manifest that the servant, to which the Savior alluded, was something quite different from a hired man, who is always bringing his employer into debt by the labors of every hour? I do not introduce the case of the servant, who received no thanks for his services, to prove that such servitude was right, or to show that it had the Savior's approval; but merely to show that it existed. For the same purpose I would refer you to a remark which Paul made in his epistle to the Galatians: "Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors." The servant, whom the apostle here selects to illustrate the non-age of a child, was manifestly under the control of his master in a different sense from a hired laborer. Do not those passages in the New Testament where *bond* and *free*, and *bondman* and *free-*

man, are placed in opposition to each other, evidently suppose the existence of a servitude which is of the nature of slavery? for there is no such contrast, as these passages suppose, between common laborers and their employers.

But in this investigation we are chiefly concerned to know whether the servitude in question was found in the church: and, if it was found there, to know what Christians were required to do in relation to it. That it was found in the church, as well as in the surrounding world, is made evident to my own mind by such arguments as I will now mention.

(1.) *Names descriptive of such servitude* were applied to a portion of the members in the apostolic churches. In the dialect of that period, the name of *servant*, when used in connection with that of master, meant a bondman. Paul encouraged the servants who were in the church of Ephesus to a conscientious obedience of their masters, by assuring them, "Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be *bond* or *free*." The force of his argument obliges us to understand that *bond*, in contradistinction from *free*, describes the condition they were in at the very time when they were thus addressed. Nor did he say any thing at all contradic-

tory to this in his epistle to the Galatians, when he declared, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither *bond* nor *free*, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ:" for the members of Christ's church are one, in a very important sense, without supposing this unity to annihilate all those distinctions which previously existed among them. *Male* and *female* are one in Christ; and yet there remains not only the distinction of sex, but also that of rule and subordination, both in the private family and in the church of God. Paul, writing to Timothy, says, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor." If his calling them servants did not fully decide their servile state in the family, it was decided by its being said of them, that they were *under the yoke*.

(2.) There is an address to servants in the first epistle to the Corinthians which, in my view, is full proof that what we now call slavery had then an existence in the church. "Art thou called," said the apostle, "being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." Here a comparison is drawn between the two states of *servitude* and *freedom*. The servant is admonished that the latter condition is to be preferred, if he can en-

joy it; but that if this should be impracticable he need not be discontented, seeing he has the great privilege of being Christ's freeman. Surely it could not have been a hired servant which the apostle had his eye upon in this address: for, in the first place, he would never have told the laborer that he had better be idle than to be employed: and, next, he would not have needed to advise a hired servant to use his liberty, in case he could obtain it; for such a servant could not have lost his liberty.

(3.) That the appellation *servants*, when used in the apostolic epistles, for the purpose of describing one part of the domestic circle, intended such servants as still held that relation to the family, may be inferred from this circumstance, that it is introduced in connection with other domestic relations which had a present existence. The *husbands* and *wives*, the *parents* and *children*, which are spoken of, were such as still sustained those relations; how then can we avoid understanding the same concerning *masters* and *servants?* As the catalogue commences with *real* relationships, does it not also end with them? See Eph. chap. 5 and 6: Col. 3 and 4.

(4.) We infer with great certainty that the *masters* and *servants*, mentioned in the apos-

tolic epistles, were not empty names, but real existing relations, from the circumstance, that duties growing out of these relations are strictly enjoined. While the men who have ceased to hold an office, may still retain its honorary title, it neither obliges them to the performance of official duties, nor does it impose any obligation on their fellow citizens to submit to their orders. The general and the judge, who have gone out of their respective offices, have no more control over the army or the court, because they are yet distinguished by their former titles, than if their titles had gone into oblivion.

Thus, I think, it is made apparent by the light of scripture alone, that in the days of the apostles there existed in the world, and even in the church, a servitude of the same nature of that which we call slavery. Having ascertained that the masters and servants, who were fellow members in the New Testament church, were such as then held that relation to each other indicated by these names, it concerns us, in the *next* place, to know what the scripture says concerning the obligations connected with this relationship.

We inquire, first, what the scripture says to the servants? Does it tell them to disregard

the authority of their masters? Did not the apostles as strictly enjoin it upon servants to be subject to the authority of their masters, as they enjoined it upon Christians within the bounds of the empire to be subject to the authority of the Cæsars? Did they not make it an important article in the Christianity of those who were under the yoke of domestic bondage, that they should count their masters worthy of all honor? Did they not consider such obedient conduct in servants as necessary to prevent the name of God and his doctrine from being blasphemed? It was enjoined on the servants, and that repeatedly, that they should obey in all things their masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. One of the apostles supposes a case where the masters were not Christians, but quite the reverse; yet even in such a case, this is the direction he gives: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." Another apostle states a different case, where their masters are brethren in Christ. He cautions servants who are thus circumstanced against despising their masters, because they are brethren. He was afraid lest their equality in

the church should make them forget their inferiority in the family. The inculcation of subjection in two such opposite cases furnishes striking proof that the apostles, while they were guided by the spirit of inspiration, never uttered a syllable to encourage servants to break away from their masters, or refuse obedience to their commands; that is, to those commands which did not contravene the commands of the Most High. For whenever human commands required disobedience to the divine, the apostles themselves did not feel that they were brought under obligation by the acts of any government on earth. Their maxim was, "We ought to obey God rather than man."

In the countries which the apostles visited, for the purpose of extending the kingdom of Christ, they not only forbore to excite a spirit of insurrection among the slaves, by their own preaching and writings, but they were moved by the Holy Ghost to forbid others to do it; more especially, to forbid such as held the office of teachers in the church. Paul, in his charge to Timothy, is very explicit in telling him what instructions to give to servants that were under the yoke, concerning their obedient and respectful treatment of their masters.

After being somewhat particular, he says, "These things teach and exhort." Nor does he rest satisfied with this, but adds, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing," &c. To Titus he gave similar directions in relation to this very subject. He says, "Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2, 3. Col. 3. 22—25. Eph. 6. 5—8. 1 Pet. 2. 18.

We now feel an interest in knowing what these men of God, who were moved by the Holy Ghost to instruct the churches, said to the *masters*. After Paul had exhorted servants to perform the duties of their humble station in singleness of heart as unto Christ, he turns to their masters and says, "And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him." This he said to the masters who were in the church of Ephesus. He said much the same

to the masters in the church at Colosse. Did he require them to manumit their servants? He does not mention it. However much he might have rejoiced in seeing them do it of their own accord, he did not feel himself authorized to enjoin it, but based his instructions to them on the relation which then existed between them and their servants; and inculcated such duties as the continuance of that relation would render obligatory. See Scott's Notes on 1 Tim. 6. 1—5.

I discover no place in the apostolic epistles where manumission is directly enjoined, unless it be thus enjoined by Paul on his fellow-laborer Philemon. The apostle, after being made the instrument of the conversion of Onesimus, his fugitive servant, sends him back to his master with a request that he might be favorably received—"Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." But this expressive language, when viewed in connection with the whole epistle, seems to imply no more than the obligation that Philemon was under to receive Onesimus back into his family, as something more now than a mere servant, even a beloved brother.

This, as it seems to me, is a plain unsophisticated statement of what the New Testament

says on this much agitated question. Nor dare I, for the sake of avoiding a popular outcry, give a different and unnatural interpretation to the word of God. Now, at the first glance, this subject may present such a difficulty to our minds as to cause us to exclaim, "How can these things be! How can He, who made of one blood all the nations of men, be the author of a book that does so much to favor a practice which is manifestly repugnant to benevolence and justice!" But let us, my brethren, on this occasion call to mind an interrogation which was addressed to an ancient saint, when laboring under a dispensation of providence uncommonly dark and inexplicable: "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it."

Poor imperfect men appear often to be grieved with God, because he is not as merciful as themselves. Some have doubtless imagined that, could they have the re-modeling of his word, they should greatly improve it. But surely we ought to know, that after we have received a written communication from the only wise God, accompanied with divine credentials, it becomes us to employ our faculties in discovering the wisdom displayed in such

communication, rather than in contriving methods to improve it. If He has said things in his word, which are so covered with a cloud that we cannot now see through and discover the reason why he said them, may it not be, that what we know not now we shall know hereafter?

You will recollect I have already remarked that there are two different ways taken by those who agree in believing the inspiration of the Bible, to free it from the odium drawn upon it by the subject of slavery. I have shown that one class seeks to remove the odium, by asserting that the servitude, which was recognised and legislated upon in the New Testament, did not partake of the nature of involuntary bondage. Did I believe this to be a true interpretation of God's word, I would not lift a finger to oppose it. But you already perceive, my hearers, that, with the view which I have taken of God's word, it would be wrong for me to adopt this method to prevent its being vilified and reproached. Nor do I deem this method to be necessary for its vindication. While I avow my belief that the servants, whom the New Testament required should obey their masters as a matter of moral obligation, were *bondmen*, I can add, it is also my belief, that these

requisitions were more perfect than any others, which, under existing circumstances, could have been given them. I pray you let these two considerations be duly weighed :

First. Such was the state of the world when Christ sent his gospel abroad among the nations that slavery was interwoven with the very texture of human society. It could not have been done away except by the legislative acts of the governments where it existed. But it was not compatible with the genius of Christ's spiritual kingdom to make a demand on these governments for the passing of such legislative acts. The religion of Christ makes its appeal to men as the rightful, though revolted, subjects of God's moral kingdom : and this appeal is made to them more particularly in their individual capacity. Every one is required to return from his unreasonable revolt, though the community in its corporate capacity should be for holding on its rebellion. Without waiting for alterations to be made in the frame-work of civil society, even in relation to the subject now in question, Christ wished his religion to be forthwith introduced among every people. He knew it to be adapted not only to save the souls of men from endless death, but also to meliorate the condition of every portion of society, as far

as its influence was felt, not excepting those who were in domestic bondage.

On this important subject I will take the liberty to place before you the sentiments of that judicious commentator Dr. Scott, as they are exhibited in his notes on Eph. 6. 5—9. "St. Paul next exhorts servants, who had embraced Christianity, to be obedient to their own masters, according to the flesh, or to whom they were subjected in temporal matters. In general, the servants at that time were slaves, the property of their masters; and often treated with great severity, though seldom with modern cruelty. But the apostles were ministers of religion, not politicians; they had not that influence among rulers and legislators, which would have been requisite to the abolition of slavery; and in that state of society, as to other things, this would not have been expedient, as God did not please miraculously to interpose in the case; and they did not deem it proper to exasperate their persecutors, by expressly contending against the lawfulness of slavery. Yet, both the law of love, and the gospel of grace, tend to its abolition; and the universal prevalence of Christianity must annihilate it, with many other evils, which in the present state of things cannot be wholly avoided. In the wis-

dom of God, the apostles were left to take such matters as they found them, and to teach servants and masters their respective duties; in the performance of which the evil would be mitigated; till, in due time, it should be exterminated by Christian legislators."

Secondly. The religion of Christ by giving such a prominence to the ONE THING NEEDFUL, as to throw every thing else out of sight, was in the very best manner adapted to arrest the attention of a world lying in wickedness. It makes the glorifying and enjoying of God man's chief end. It merges all the distinctions existing among men in this one supreme object. "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." When the gospel comes to the bondman it proffers him a freedom infinitely more desirable than that which it is in the power of his master to give him. If he has attained this freedom, he is told he need entertain but little anxiety concerning the other. "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it—for he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman." "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted." His religion, by which he is brought into a holy and everlasting union with the Son of God, does more to exalt him than could be

done by all the riches and honors of the earth. Do you not believe, my brethren, that a religion which throws all sublunary things into the shade, is better calculated to make a deep impression on the public mind than if it were otherwise constructed? Two kinds of servitude exist: the one on the part of the servant is innocent, the other is criminal; the one can last no longer than this life, the other may last forever. Now, if a slave-holding government would have permitted the ministers of Christ to come among its servile population, to preach against both kinds of servitude, it is quite a question whether it would have been as well adapted to subserve the best interests of that class of community, as the method which was prescribed and actually pursued.

Thus have I endeavored, by exhibiting the spiritual character of Christ's kingdom, to give some probable reasons why his ministers were instructed to enjoin subjection upon servants, instead of enjoining emancipation upon their masters. But as a desire to protect God's book, rather than to encourage slavery, has been my object in these discourses, I now propose to show that there are things in this holy book which have a very favorable aspect upon that class of men who are in servitude.

1. They are made as welcome as any others to the blessings of the gospel. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." The commission which we have received from the chief Shepherd is, to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," without distinction of nation or rank. Both the door of the church and the gate of heaven stand open to the servant as well as to his master. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither *bond* nor *free*, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." That God, with whom there is no respect of persons, gives the servant the same free access to the mercy seat which he gives to his master. If the servant is Christ's freeman, while the master is Satan's slave, God will treat each of them according to his spiritual character, not his external condition: the servant he will bring near to him; but the master he will know afar off. They who are admitted to heaven will not be put any higher for having been masters in this world, nor any lower because they were servants. If the scriptures had intimated that in God's kingdom above, where there are no subordinate governments to interfere with His, some of his subjects would be degraded because their skin was black, or because their condition had been servile, in undertaking to account for it,

we should be non-plussed. But there is no such intimation given. The crown of glory will be bright, not according to the rank we sustained in our probationary state, but according to the service which we rendered to our Master in heaven.

2. The Scriptures do not allow masters to be haughty and imperious, but require them to be kind and parental; and to remember that their servants are not brutes, but fellow men and fellow servants under a heavenly Master. "And ye masters," said Paul, "do the same thing to them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven: neither is there respect of persons with him." Again he said, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye have a Master in heaven." The masters were required to remember that the duties of the relation between them and their servants were reciprocal; obliging them to treat their servants in such a manner as to meet the approbation of their common Master. Abraham is commended for giving a religious training not to his children only, but to his whole household, comprehending his servants. Gen. 18. 19. These received the seal of God's gracious covenant in common with those who were the fruit of his own body.

Job did not feel that he could have cleared himself from the charge of hypocrisy, which was alleged against him, had he not been able to testify that he did not despise the cause of his man servant, or his maid servant, when they contended with him. Job 31. 13–15.

3. As far as slavery is the fruit of man-stealing it is pointedly condemned by the Scriptures. When God connected the civil with the ecclesiastical government of Israel, this was made a capital crime. "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." Ex. 21. 16.

4. Those Jewish laws, which provided for the Hebrew servant to go out free at the end of six years of servitude, had a favorable aspect on this class of men. Ex. 21. 2. Another law which had a favorable aspect was that which forbade the Israelites to deliver up the fugitive slave who had escaped to their country for protection. Deut. 23. 15, 16. This showed that their Divine Lawgiver considered the bondman to be worthy of their sympathy and kindness. He would not therefore have him delivered up, as though he had been a felon, merely on account of his escape from bondage; especially as it was also an escape from the darkness of pagan idolatry. I would here remark that the fugitive servant,

whom they were required to protect, instead of delivering him up to his master, must doubtless refer to one who should flee to them from another nation: for so long as servitude was tolerated by their laws, their government would have been wanting in self-consistency, if it had allowed them to detain the servants of their fellow citizens.

5. The Scriptures reveal it as an important article of our faith, that mankind of every language and complexion are descended from a common stock. Paul told the Athenians that God, who made the world, made of *one blood* all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth. Acts 17. 24–26. Between men and beasts there is a wide difference—a difference founded in nature. But between the tribes of men there is no such fundamental difference. We are all made after the similitude of God, having souls which are rational and immortal. The chief difference that exists between the tribes of Adam is produced by the different advantages which they enjoy for the cultivation of their minds. The same people who in one period of their history are barbarians, in a subsequent period become civilized and refined. And here let me say, that though the scriptures give a toleration to involuntary servitude, I do not

know of any place where they teach us that white men have a right to make slaves of *black men*, any more than black men have a right to make slaves of the whites. They no where give such a preference to one complexion over another.

I readily concede that the slavery of the Africans is a fulfilment of an early prediction concerning the future condition of the three grand branches of the family of Noah, the father of the new world. Gen. 9. 18–27. But who will dare to plead such a prediction to justify our making slaves of the descendants of Ham? It was predicted that the Egyptians would enslave the Israelites; and it was also predicted that God would punish them for doing it. Gen. 15. 13, 14. It was predicted that the Jews would crucify their Messiah: but was their sin any less aggravated because of its prediction? Or have they been punished any less severely, because their wickedness fulfilled the counsels of God? The question with us should not be, What has the Lord purposed to bring to pass? but, What has he commanded us to do? There cannot be the least doubt that the cruel slave trade, by which so many of the sons of Ham have been carried away by the hand of violence from their native land into perpetual bondange, will be found to constitute no small item in the

guilt of their brethren the sons of Shem and Japheth.

6. Though the religion of the Son of God does not abrogate slavery by an express statute, it inculcates principles whose manifest tendency is to effect its abrogation. It requires every man to love his neighbor (i. e. his fellow man,) as himself; and to treat others as he would reasonably wish them to treat him, in case their circumstances were reversed. It forbids us to despise the poor, and requires us to condescend to men of low estate. It enjoins it upon us to manifest our benevolent regard to our neighbor by doing him all the good in our power. Its spirit and language is, "As therefore we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men." See Mark 12. 31. Matt. 7. 12. Rom. 12. 16. Gal. 6. 10. Let these principles have their full influence on those who hold their fellow men in bondage, and what will be the result? Will they not result in the removal of the yoke of bondage? If they do not in every instance produce an immediate emancipation of their servants, they will prompt them to the immediate use of means to prepare the way for it. If the masters should say, Our servants are as yet unqualified for self government; it may be replied, If you love them as yourselves, you will exert your influence over them to qualify them for

self government. And since it is a true proverb, that "it is not good for the soul to be without knowledge," a proper concern for their welfare will lead you, instead of withholding instruction from them, to impart it freely.

Nothing can be more evident than the benevolent nature of our holy religion. As soon as it is cordially embraced it awakens in us a tender concern for the happiness of our fellow men. If they are ignorant and out of the way, it enkindles in our breasts a compassion for them, accompanied with a desire to remove their ignorance and reclaim them from their wanderings. When this religion has taken the throne of the heart, it will not suffer us to feel indifferent towards the happiness of those who are distinguished from us by language or complexion, and separated from us by rivers and oceans. If we hear that they are in a degraded and wretched condition, we are impelled to contrive ways for their relief. To meet their wants we send them the gospel of the grace of God. Some go in person, to explain by word and example the gospel we send them. And certainly, if it is the nature of this divine religion to extend its benevolent concern to the ignorant and degraded who are in the ends of the earth, it cannot overlook such objects of compassion who are in our own land, and within our domestic circles.

DISCOURSE III.

Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world.—John 18. 36.

Christian brethren, I have again read in your hearing these precious words of the Savior, which declare that the kingdom that he has set up in the world is not of the world.

I felt desirous of detaining you a little longer on this important passage, that I might have an opportunity more directly to show the influence which I think it may exert in healing some of the divisions that now exist among the subjects of this spiritual kingdom.

Christ gave his disciples an express commandment to love one another. Paul charged them to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Peter exhorted them to be of one mind, to love as brethren, to be pitiful —to be courteous—to seek peace and pursue it. And the beloved disciple was frequent in urging Christians to live in love. John 13. 34, 35. Eph. 4. 3. 1 Peter 3. 8, 11. 1 John 4. 7, 11, 20, 21.

Have these injunctions of Christ and his apos-

tles become either obsolete or unimportant? If they have not, why are they so much disregarded at the present day? The Israel of God is not only divided into different tribes, but every tribe has its subdivisions. In view of these distractions, which greatly expose us to the assults of the enemy, let us search for their cause. Is not this one cause of our distractions, that we have lost sight of the *spiritual* character of that kingdom whereof we are subjects?

That we live in a very trying period, must be evident to all. It is therefore a matter of the highest consequence that we, who profess to be the subjects of the kingdom of Christ, should know what part we have to act at such a crisis as this. One thing is clear, that we are required to make the building up of His kingdom our supreme object. To this, every thing relating to the kingdoms and interests of this world, must be made subordinate. In this sentiment we shall be agreed, at least so far as we are imbued with the spirit of Christ. Concerning the *means* to be used for the advancement of this holy kingdom, its real friends may possibly be disagreed; and this disagreement may have a distracting influence. But is there no way for them to become agreed, even as to the means which they shall use for its advancement? And

what other way is as well adapted to produce an agreement in this matter, as for them all to repair to the law and to the testimony? Christ tells us to *search the scriptures*, and Paul exhorts us to let the word of Christ dwell in us *richly*. A sacred regard to his word is the only thing which can produce any consistent harmony among his subjects. As his kingdom is diverse from all others, so it has a statute book of its own, to regulate all its internal affairs. And since this book, which reveals the mind of Christ, represents his kingdom to be spiritual and not secular, or in other words, a kingdom which has no interference with the governments of this world, is it not clearly the duty of Christians, even in this age, distinguished for improvements, to be united in seeking its advancement as a kingdom which is *exclusively spiritual?*

I conclude we are all agreed in believing it to be the duty of the church, whether located under monarchical or free governments, to send missionaries to teach all nations the religion of Christ. And shall we not also be agreed, that the instructions which are to be imparted by these missionaries are to be the same, whatever may happen to be the form of civil government in those countries from which they are sent. This does not necessarily suppose that the mis-

sionaries are required to feel indifferent on this subject, but it supposes them to understand that the kingdom, whose extension they are commissioned to promote, is wholly of a spiritual character, having no direct collision with any form of civil dominion. If the religion, which they carry to the nations sitting in darkness, shall eventually better their civil condition, it will give them pleasure; but this is not the object of their mission. It is one of immensely greater importance, namely, to translate men from the power of darkness—from the kingdom of Satan—into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Here let me state a case which may possibly occur. I will suppose, that when a number of the disciples of Christ are met for the purpose of forming a constitution for a missionary society, some of their number were to make a motion, that either in the preamble or in some distinct article, the association should clearly exhibit their views on the subject of civil government, so as to declare their united abhorrence of every thing of the nature of despotism; would not a right understanding of the spiritual character of Christ's kingdom be sufficient to settle the point, and bring them all to act in unison? Would they not evidently act out of character, as a missionary meeting, even to go into a de-

bate on the merits of the question, whether monarchy or democracy is the best form of government? If they were all to a man in favor of a democratical form, still nothing could possibly be more improper than for them, in the capacity of a missionary association, to express that preference. They are met to provide means to effect a moral revolution through all Satan's empire. To effect this, they propose to send the ministers of the gospel into some countries where the inhabitants are ruled by absolute sovereigns. And do we not all know that Christ does not send his ministers to teach rebellion and excite insurrections?

There probably are few spots on the globe where the people have less liberty than in the Sandwich Islands: but the missionaries have not taught them to rebel against their king and his chiefs. While they have taught them to desert the standard of the prince of darkness, and become reconciled to prince Immanuel, they have inculcated a conscientious subjection to their civil rulers. And is there a Christian in the whole church who does not fully approve the course they have taken?

I will state another case. I will suppose that, in such a missionary meeting as that which has already been described, a proposal should

be made to insert an article expressive of their sentiments on the subject of *slavery ;* (for example, an article which should exclude slaveholders from a place in the society, or their contributions from a place in its funds,) would there not be the same reason for objecting against its insertion ? Instead of going into a debate on the question, whether slavery be right or wrong, would not this be the first inquiry : Is this a proper question for a missionary convention to debate ? To decide this, it would behoove them again to repair to the law and to the testimony to obtain light. Is there evidence that this subject was looked at by the King of Zion, and by those men who, under the guidance of his unerring Spirit, were commissioned to be the first propagators of his gospel ? If so, it iscle ar that their precepts and practice in relation to it must have a binding influence on all those who come after them. If such an article was not inserted in that inspired constitution, which is to regulate the whole missionary work, until the earth shall become evangelized, does it not afford conviction to our minds that such an article would now be inappropriate ? Were we able to say that those who framed this divine constitution appear never to have thought of the matter, it

would be quite different. It seems they did think of it, and were explicit in giving rules concerning it. The subject was repeatedly introduced by the apostles in their inspired epistles; as I have already had occasion to show. It is distinctly noticed in six of Paul's epistles and in one of Peter's. See 1 Cor. 7. 20—22. Eph. 6. 5. Col. 3. 22—25. 1 Tim. 6. 1—4. Tit. 2. 9, 10. Philemon. 1 Pet. 2. 18.

These men, who were guided by that wisdom which is from above—that wisdom which cannot err—appear not to have raised the question, Is slavery right? any more than, Is monarchy right? While they gave no direct expression of their sentiments on these questions, they hesitated not to inculcate on their fellow disciples subjection both to the *master* and to the *sovereign*. Nor did they allow the unworthiness of the man who held the place of master or sovereign, to release either the servant or the subject from obligation to his commands. Christ required his disciples to submit to the monarchs of Rome. In accordance with this, Paul exhorted every soul to be subject to the higher powers; and exhorted servants to obey in all things their masters according to the flesh. Peter said, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man

for the Lord's sake.—Honor the king.—Servants be subject unto your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."

We have only two inspired epistles which were directed to men engaged in the work of the gospel ministry.* They were both written by Paul; one of them to Timothy and the other to Titus. In each of them the subject in question is noticed, and noticed in such a way as to show it to be incumbent on the ministers of Christ to exhort servants to be obedient to their masters. In one of them, namely, that which was written to his son Timothy, he taught him not only what was his own duty in relation to this subject, but proceeded pointedly to censure the conduct of any Christian teacher who should take a different course. After saying, "These things" (that is, things relating to the subjection of servants to their masters, whether believing or unbelieving) "teach and exhort," he adds, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing," &c.

* If Philemon was a minister there are three.

By consulting these apostolic writings, is it not made perfectly evident, in case Paul, and Peter, and their fellow workers, the first missionaries of the cross, could have a voice in the missionary meeting which we have supposed, that they would object to the insertion of the proposed article? Would they not tell us that they spake, wrote, and acted in relation to this subject as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? Would they not tell us that what we find in their epistles was written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come? That it was left for the instruction of all who should follow them in the great work of evangelizing the nations?

Some may, however, imagine that with all the increase of light which has been poured on this subject, it behooves missionary societies at the present day to be explicit in the avowal of their sentiments. Doubtless it behooves them to be explicit in avowing their sentiments concerning the great and distinguishing doctrines of salvation: but if they and all Christendom were unanimous in their abhorrence of slavery, this, as it seems to me, would not be a proper occasion for them to express that abhorrence. If *we* have the light, the nations which we are attempting

to christianize are sitting in darkness. Their darkness, it is true, extends to such matters as civil government and domestic servitude, as well as to the subject of religion. Yet while the gospel seeks to dispel all their darkness, and give them light on every subject which will improve their character and condition, its chief anxiety and more appropriate work, is to dissipate their moral darkness, and bring them into an acquaintance with the God who made them, and the Savior who died for their redemption. The other matters are viewed as being of such minor importance as to be thrown wholly into the back ground. Were Christian missionaries to give a prominence to those other matters; for example, were they in their sermons to express a sentiment concerning the form of civil government or domestic servitude, would they not thereby hinder the gospel of Christ? Would not such a divergency from their proper work cause those for whose salvation they labor, to stop their ears against the instructions they present concerning those weightier matters which relate to God and eternity?

Is there not therefore the same reason, at the present period, to say to the heralds of salvation who are sent forth to disciple the nations, " Be

determined not to know any thing among the apostate children of Adam, wherever you go, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," as there was for giving such instructions to those who were sent forth on this errand eighteen hundred years ago? Whatever topics it behooves the missionaries to leave untouched in their ministrations among the heathen, should manifestly be left untouched in the constitution of the Society which sends them forth: for this, as well as the Bible, they should take in their hands. The latter will show their authority as it is derived from Christ the Head of the Church, while the other will prove that in their missionary enterprise they have the fellowship and co-operation of their Christian brethren.

If we have been able to understand the scriptures on this subject, I would ask my Christian brethren, whether it be right to charge the members of a missionary society with being pro-slavery men; or even to charge them with cowardice in the avowal of their sentiments, merely because, in their associate capacity, they observe a studied silence and refuse to agitate the slavery question? Were this a sufficient ground for such charges, would they not lie equally against Christ and his Apostles?

Will not a right understanding of the spiritual character of Christ's kingdom, as being perfectly distinct from the kingdoms of this world, do much to give a right direction to the efforts of those of his subjects whose lot it has been to come on the stage of life at this period, when the slavery question is doing so much to agitate the public mind? The question with us should not be, what course will be the most popular? but what course is pointed out by our King? What will please him? I have already expressed my belief, that His religion is calculated to do away the whole system of domestic slavery. If then it is the tendency of the religion of Christ to subvert slavery, the question will arise, whether the Christian church ought not to purge itself from this evil as fast as possible by the power of discipline. This is a very interesting question, and one which deeply concerns the welfare of Christ's kingdom. And how shall it be answered? All the loyal subjects of the kingdom will agree in saying, it must be determined by referring to our statute book. Christ is King in Zion, and his word is our only safe directory.

But perhaps it will be said, "We have a right to institute discipline relating to crimes which are not specifically named in this divine

directory; such as gambling, horse-racing, and the like, provided we can show that they are at variance with the general spirit of the scriptures." This is conceded. But where our King has himself legislated, it must be our duty to regulate our discipline by his legislation, whether we are able to discover the wisdom of it or not. If our King has not interfered with civil polity, but has required us to be subject to the various governments under which we live, it clearly intimates his will, that we should bring no charges against each other in the administration of the laws of his kingdom, on account of the preference any of us shall happen to give to this or that side in the political world; or to the preference we give to this or that mode of civil government. According to the spirit of his kingdom, the monarch of the Sandwich Islands could be received into the bosom of his church, (provided he had suitable moral qualifications,) without being required to relinquish his throne, or even alter the structure of his government. The laws of Christ would require him to rule righteously, and act the part of a father to his people; but they would not compel him to renounce his place as an absolute sovereign.

Here some may wish to ask, whether the

King of Zion has been sufficiently explicit concerning domestic servitude, to direct the discipline of his church in relation to this subject? Some may think, that this whole system of servitude is so hostile to the benevolent spirit of the gospel, that nothing can be plainer than the propriety of instituting a course of discipline against the man who refuses to let these oppressed ones go free. But if the King himself has a statute on this very case, ought it not to regulate the decisions of his church? And has he not a statute touching the case in question? The case repeatedly comes before us in the New Testament. At present let us look at what is recorded at the beginning of the last chapter of Paul's first epistle to Timothy: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor; that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren: but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort." This statute recognizes masters and servants as fellow subjects in Christ's spiritual kingdom, and thus sustaining the relation of Christian *brethren*

without a discontinuance of their old relation as *masters* and *servants*.

It may be urged, that, in view of the additional light which has been poured on this subject since the days of the apostles, it now becomes the duty of the church to enact new laws in relation to it—laws which shall be more in accordance with public sentiment and the existing state of affairs in the civilized world. That the augmentation of light on this subject increases the obligation of masters to release their servants from involuntary bondage, is a matter of which I have no doubt. But does it give us liberty to say to them "You *shall* release your servants; and unless you do it, we will exclude you from the visible kingdom of Christ?" When they refer us back to those inspired rules which were given on purpose to regulate the internal government of this kingdom, what shall we say? We shall not pretend that the law-making power is intrusted with us: or that we have a right, by rules of our own forming, to set aside those which were given us by our Master.

They, who would now exclude from the church every master who does not immediately emancipate his servants, imagine they find a way to get over the difficulty arising from the divine

enactment, to which I have referred, by showing that certain other evils, which were tolerated for a time, were afterwards expressly disallowed. They tell us, that Moses wrote a precept for the Israelites concerning divorces, which Christ annulled; declaring the practice to be one that never pleased God, but was *suffered* on account of the hardness of their heart: also, that God once tolerated polygamy, and yet afterward forbad it, as a thing which was contrary to the original law of marriage. These examples have some pertinency in relation to the case before us, so far as they serve to show, that in God's government over men in the present life, he has seen fit to tolerate things which he does not require, yea, things which, from the whole spirit of his word, we may learn that he actually condemns. And for myself, I have no doubt that the servitude termed *slavery*, is one of those things. Should a pro-slavery-man adduce the passages of God's word, where the relations of master and servant are recognized, and the duties of each relation inculcated, as proof that God has no displeasure in slavery, it will be to our point to make it appear that other relations (such as that between a husband and a company of wives) have been recognized in the scriptures,

and the duties resulting from them enjoined ; and yet those relations have afterwards been shown to have been *tolerated* rather than *approved :* also, to make it appear that things have been suffered for a while on account of the hardness of men's hearts, (such as the husband's giving his wife a divorce for a multitude of causes,) which at length it was declared should be suffered no longer.

But all must see that there is one important difference between the examples adduced, and the case which we have under our eye. In those examples we have *divine* authority for granting, and also for revoking the act of toleration. But in the case before us, we have the toleration act unrevoked. If those tolerations which were granted in the Old Testament had not been revoked in the New, by the same authority which granted them, I would ask whether we should be justifiable in excluding a man from the church for having a plurality of wives, or for having put away his wife for some other cause beside that which is specified by the Savior ?

It might have been consistent, even while polygamy and the lax system in relation to divorces were sustained by a divine act of tolera-

tion, where any one had become convinced it would be more pleasing to God, that a man should have but one wife at once, and that he should bear with her infirmities, instead of putting her away,—I say it might have been consistent, that he should have sought to dissuade his brethren from availing themselves of these toleration acts, by showing them that the things in question were merely *suffered*, not approved. It would have been consistent for him to have argued with his brethren, counselled and exhorted them: but would it have been right for him to have sought to drive them from the church, at the very time while the toleration act in their favor remained unrepealed? Would it, for example, have been right for Lot to have treated Abraham as a heathen man, as soon as he married Hagar?

The New Testament injunction, to honor the king, obliges those Christians who live under a kingly government, to submit to it; but it does not forbid them, in common with their fellow-subjects, to seek, in the use of peaceable measures, to effect a change in the frame of their government. So while the church is not allowed to make any direct attack on that appendage of civil society which

relates to servitude, individual Christians have a right, in common with their fellow-citizens, to plead the cause of the enslaved, and by peaceable measures to attempt an entire change in the laws relating to this subject. Wilberforce, as a member of the British parliament, acted a noble part in seeking to abolish the slave trade, and drive slavery from the kingdom. The friends of humanity approve of his zeal and rejoice in his success. But had he, in the capacity of a member of the household of faith, sought to procure an ecclesiastical enactment to excommunicate from the church every man who did not release his slaves, would such a procedure have corresponded with those inspired enactments which relate to this subject? His religion fitted him for his elevated station in civil society; and this was the place for him to put forth the energies of his noble mind, to change the very structure of that society in relation to the subject of slavery. As soon as this can be effected, the laws of Christ withdraw from the master all right of retaining his servants in bondage, and release them from their obligation to remain in his service.

We know that it was predicted that the kingdom which the God of heaven should set

up, would break in pieces the kingdoms which had been set up by the successive conquerors of the earth. But how was this prediction to be carried into effect? Not by sending hostile armies against them; nor by any direct attack upon their civil institutions; but by rectifying their views concerning God and his government, and by producing a merciful change in the character of their whole population. Men all over the earth can be received into the kingdom of God, without abjuring allegiance to their earthly sovereigns, or without so much as being asked, in relation to civil government, to give their opinion concerning its best form of administration. What could have been more contrary to the genius of the gospel and to the spirit of the commission which the apostles received from their Master, than to have seen them forming some churches composed of royalists, and some of republicans? Or to have seen them inserting articles in their formularies which should relate to these political questions?

Perhaps some may think that in a country where regal authority has been put down, and a popular government established, it would not be improper for Christians to insert in their confession of faith an article expressive of their

abhorrence of monarchy. Such an article might not be as mischievous as it would have been while the government they were under was monarchical; but I think it would be equally improper and out of place. It must make an awkward appearance among the articles of a Christian church.

Will not the remark which has just been made apply also to the subject of slavery? It has been shown, if I do not greatly mistake, that the apostles did not consider themselves authorized, as the ministers of religion, to require the abolition of slavery, any more than the abolition of monarchy. They introduced no article into their creed relating to this topic. They formed churches which were composed of masters, in connection with their servants who still remained under the yoke. They appear never to have thought of suffering different opinions concerning the lawfulness of servitude, to be the occasion of giving rise to distinct church organizations. Surely if masters and their servants could live peaceably together in the same communion, those who differed merely in opinion on the subject of servitude might do so.

But in a country where slavery is already abolished by the laws of the state, may not the

churches consistently introduce an article into their confessions which shall express their abhorrence of the thing? May they not make it an essential requisite to church membership, that all who are admitted shall subscribe to a sound creed relative to this subject, as much as in relation to the doctrines of salvation? It must be acknowledged, that in a country where the law does not recognize the existence of slavery, an article of this nature introduced into church creeds, would not be at variance with the civil government; yet it behooves us to inquire whether, even here, it would not be out of its place; and whether it would not even be at variance with the divine rule relating to the things which shall be made essential to membership. Is it right to divide the body of Christ, by insisting on qualifications for membership, and on terms of communion, which his word does not require? If we make one thing an essential requisite to holding a place in his church, which is not made so by his word, will it not lead to dangerous results? If we permit one such thing to take the place of an essential requisite, how can we resist the claims which may be made by another thing of this nature? And where will be an end to the *shibboleths* which

this principle would introduce into those formularies that are designed for a bond of union among the disciples of Christ? Even on the subject now before us, if this principle were adopted, it might lead to several distinct organizations among those who were agreed on the main question. It might require that one church should be composed of one class of abolitionists, and another church of another class, according to the difference of opinion which they might entertain relative to the most proper measures for the removing of the existing evil.

Here suffer me to put a serious question: Do you not believe, Christian brethren, that in proportion as such unauthorized bonds of union are introduced and dwelt upon, it tends to make us lose sight of the great doctrines of the gospel which are more appropriately the bond of Christian fellowship? Were some of our churches to require their members to subscribe to an Anti-slavery article, and others to a Colonization article, do you not think its influence would be hurtful to the cause of truth and piety? Would it not issue in this; that ere long these would be churches of *Abolitionists*, and churches of *Colonizationists*, rather than churches of humble experimental Christians?

To me, brethren, it is a matter of deep regret that this subject should be the cause of so much mutual recrimination and division among the friends of the Redeemer. Some, I know, will say that among His friends there is no division, and can be none on so plain a subject. I will grant it would require a stretch of charity to believe that there are any of the Redeemer's friends, who despise their fellow man, because his skin is not colored like their own: or who choose to keep their servants in the most brutish ignorance, to prevent their knowing themselves to be men. But does the Bible authorize us to assert that such is the character of every master? Does it authorize us to say of every man who has a bond servant, that he is the servant of sin and in the bond of iniquity? The faith of Abraham was unquestionable; and yet he had quite a company of servants, born in his house and bought with his money. In a later period of the world there were men sustaining the relation of masters, who were nevertheless considered as true believers. Paul evidently supposes that in his days there might have been servants under the yoke who had truly Christian masters, even such as were "faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." He did not seem

desirous of exciting in the minds of these servants any suspicion of the piety of their masters. The apostle appears to have entertained a favorable opinion of the character both of Philemon and Apphia, the master and mistress of Onesimus. See Philemon, verses 1, 2. I am willing to believe that his own views relative to this matter were so enlightened, that he would not have been the owner of a servant, if he had been furnished with funds to make the purchase; but it is evident that he did not exclude from charity all those who were owners of servants. I have no doubt that the light which has been reflected on this subject since Paul wrote his epistles, has increased the obligation of masters to break the yoke of bondage from the necks of their servants; but I cannot see that the scriptures justify us in concluding that every man, who now sustains the relation of a master, is to be ranked among the enemies of Christ.

But why, I would ask, does this matter serve to separate very friends all over the country? Why are the disciples, and even the ministers of Christ, who themselves live far from the region of slavery, thrown into the attitude of hostile array by means of this subject? In practice we are alike. There are none of us who have slaves; or who

expect to have them; or, as I would fain believe, wish to have them. We glory in the distinguished privilege of being citizens of the free states. We rejoice that the small degree of slavery, which once existed among us, is done away by legislative enactments. None of us wish to see the slave laws restored to our civil codes. Moreover, we sincerely wish that the example which we have given, may be followed by all our sister states: while we are not ignorant of the fact, that the sacrifice required to be made by those states where servile labor is chiefly depended on, must be much greater than that which was required to be made by ourselves.

Whatever may be the feelings of other men in relation to this subject, I think I have not mistaken my own. I am no slave-holder, nor the son of a slave-holder: nor have I any brother or kinsman who has any connection with the business. I do not despise those Christians whose skin is black, any more than those whose skin is white. I think I truly wish to see the whole African race, both bond and free, regarded as fellow-men, and raised from their present state of degradation. I have received no bribe to plead in favor of slavery. I have but a poor opinion of the thing, nor have I intended to

say a word in favor, even of its toleration, any farther than I have been impelled by a conscientious regard to the word of God.

From the knowledge I have of my own motives, I am led to judge of the motives of my brethren, who take much the same stand in relation to this matter which I do myself. I cannot think that all the ministers of the gospel and other members of the churches, who dissent from certain opinions of their brethren on the other side of the question, and protest against some of their measures, ought to be denounced as enemies to the colored race, and as friends of the whole system of slavery. I believe that many, who are stigmatized as pro-slavery men, would be willing to pay a considerable tax, provided this might furnish the means for effecting a peaceable emancipation of all those throughout our whole republic who are still held in bondage.*

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* Is there not some way by which we can prevail on our sister states, where bondmen are yet found, to *consent* to a general emancipation? To bring them the more speedily to consent to this, would it not be an expression of kindness to offer them some pecuniary aid, to enable them to bear such a change in their temporal circumstances as may seem to them nearly ruinous? If we consider them under obligation to emancipate

While I am conscious it has been my intention to give you a correct view of domestic servitude, as it is exhibited to us in the inspired writings, I would by no means intimate that I consider all those, who have taken a different view of the matter, as men who disregard the authority of the scriptures. There are doubtless men on both sides, in this controversy, who possess the same veneration for the word of God. And I have thought I could discover one way to account for the strange fact, that men who have no practical concern in this business, and who would therefore seem equally free from any selfish bias to hinder their candid investigation of the subject, should nevertheless arrive at conclusions so different. In their examination of this matter, I have thought that one class of Christians have confined their attention, almost exclusively, to what they consider must naturally be the practical results of the great principles of the Bible, without having paid equal attention

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their servants, without waiting for any indemnity, still we have a right to encourage them in well-doing. Is there not now a favorable opportunity in this country to raise a revenue for this benevolent object, by laying a tax on certain imported articles of consumption, much used all over our country, and which are now freed from taxation?

to those rules which were given on purpose to regulate the practice of the churches relative to this specific case. This class have come to the conclusion, that involuntary servitude cannot be tolerated another day: that if it be tolerated by the state, the church must lift her warning voice against it, and exclude from her own fellowship all who do not embrace their views in relation to the subject.

The other class of Christians, having paid a closer attention to the specific rules which touch this very case, have felt themselves constrained to let these rules govern their practice. And according to their understanding of the rules, they feel themselves obliged still to call them their *brethren* who sustain the relation of masters, provided they appear to discharge the duties of that relation in the fear of God; commanding their servants as well as their children to keep the way of the Lord.

Nor do Christians of the class last mentioned imagine that they have overlooked those great principles of disinterested love, which are the glory of our heaven-born religion. They, as well as their brethren of the other class, earnestly desire that these holy principles may take a stronger hold of all ranks of society, and of mas-

ters among the rest. But as they feel under obligation to keep in view the specific rules, they are constrained to pursue a course somewhat different from that which is adopted by their brethren. I trust both classes are gratified, when the great principle of Christian benevolence operates powerfully enough to induce not only individual masters, but whole countries, to emancipate their servants. And I am inclined to believe that both classes sincerely desire, that this holy principle may soon exert such a mighty influence as to issue in a universal emancipation.

While waiting for this happy result, those of us who are of opinion that the specific rules alluded to have never been annulled, are convinced that the God of the Bible allows us to do nothing to foment a servile war. Did his providence open the way for any of us, to whom he has committed the ministry of reconciliation, to go into the slave states to preach his gospel, we should feel ourselves sacredly bound, by the laws of Christ, to avoid speaking any thing of an inflammatory nature, either in our public or private instructions. Nor do we mean to complain of these laws, for we are convinced that no other, relating to this matter, would have

been equally wise and good. We verily believe, if our piety should be equal to that of our brethren on the other side of the question, that our prospects of usefulness among a slave population would be decidedly the best. We should preach but one gospel, but one emancipation, to black and white, bond and free. This gospel, if set home by the power of God, would be adapted to excite the same inquiry among servants and masters, namely, "What must I do to be saved?"—saved from "sin's old yoke and Satan's chain."

We will not say that religious teachers may not more freely discuss the subject in countries and states where slavery is abolished; yet so far as these discussions are designed to exert an influence on those parts of the world where the evil still remains, we believe it to be pre-eminently important that they should be characterized with Christian meekness and benevolence. "Speaking the truth in *love*"—"In *meekness* instructing those that oppose themselves"—these directions, emanating from Him whose wisdom is perfect, are designed to guide the efforts of those of his servants who, by means of religious instructions, are seeking to change the character of an erroneous and perverse world.

It is time this subject were drawn to a close. Already I have extended my remarks beyond my first intention. In taking up this subject I was not without hope, that by placing before my fellow Christians the spiritual character of our Redeemer's kingdom, I might do something to remove discord, and promote united efforts among ourselves, for the prosperity of a cause which, I trust, is dear to all our hearts. They who have heard my discourses from the pulpit, or read my communications from the press, will bear me witness that I have stood aloof from such topics as belong rather to statesmen than divines. But since entering on this subject, which agitates the political as well as the religious community, I have had some fear, lest this attempt to prevent the church from departing from its proper sphere, should be thought, by some of my friends, to be a departure from my own. I am sure, however, that my desire has been that I might be enabled to speak on this exciting topic in such a manner as to do good, and not mischief—to promote kind, and not angry feelings among Christian brethren.

As these discourses on the kingdom of Christ were begun by an exhibition of its *heavenly nature*, suffer me to close them by calling back

your minds to this, which we ought ever to consider its most precious peculiarity. Divest the kingdom of Christ of its *spirituality*, and you divest it of its glory. It can be secularized until its beauty and glory shall have departed. What is the church of Rome now, and what has it been for more than a thousand years! It calls itself "the church"—"the kingdom of Christ:" but is in fact one of the kingdoms of this world, and as secular as any of the rest. It has therefore lost the most distinctive characteristic of Christ's unearthly kingdom. Let all the friends of the church be warned to avoid every thing which will tend to bring it down from the high elevation which Christ gave it, to a level with the interests of earth.

What a mercy have the children of men received, in having the kingdom of heaven set up among them! What a mercy that in a world of *sin* there should be a kingdom of *holiness!* in a world where every thing is unstable as water, there should be a kingdom that cannot be moved! Well may it be considered as the glory of our world. It is by the setting up of Christ's kingdom among us that the earth differs from hell. They who become united in heart to its

interests are heirs to an inheritance which will never fade away. To promote the advancement of Christ's kingdom ought to be the chief concern of the whole race; and we have reason to expect it will be the chief concern of all who are actuated by the principle of love to God and man.

The Savior sought to attract, and as it were confine our attention to this one object. He said, "*One* thing is needful." He compared the kingdom of heaven to a treasure that a man finds in a field, which appears valuable enough in his estimation, to induce him to sell all he has to buy that field. Christ required all men to seek *first* (that is, as a paramount interest) the kingdom of God.

And now, dear hearers, has this kingdom which the Savior calls *his*, and which he declares to be of an unearthly character, ever attracted *your* attention? Have you become its subjects? Are you its subjects in such a peculiar sense, that with its holy interests yours are identified? Do you prefer Jerusalem above your chief joy? Have you discerned the spiritual glory of Zion's King, and of the

kingdom over which he reigns? Does this kingdom fill your eye? Do you care more about the success of the gospel, than the success of your side in the political world? Do you care more about the success of the gospel, than success in all the business of this life? Is your attention specially turned to the use of means for the subversion of Satan's kingdom? Does subjection to his yoke appear the worst of thraldom? When you look around on those of your children who are the servants of sin, is it your first petition concerning them, that they may be delivered from this vile servitude and become Christ's freemen? Do you wish them to become the loyal subjects of Christ's holy kingdom? Do you long to see the whole world pressing into the kingdom of God? And is it one thing which gives to worldly property a value in your eyes; that it can be made greatly to subserve the advancement of a kingdom which is now in this world, but will at length be established in heaven, where its glory will exceed all we can ask or think?

Surely, my brethren, if we are agreed in understanding the nature of Christ's kingdom, and in preferring its interests above our chief

joy, we cannot be so far disagreed about other matters as to be a just cause of alienation. I would then say with the apostle; "As many as walk by this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God!"